



March 18th, 2025

House Committee on Labor
Attn: The Honorable Chair Arthur Corvese
State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI, 02903

Chair Corvese and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Rhode Island Bone Marrow and Organ Donor Leave Act (H.B. 6065). NMDP (formerly National Marrow Donor Program), runs the national volunteer bone marrow donor registry that matches unrelated adult donors with patients in need of life-saving transplants.

In Rhode Island alone, 238 patients were searching for bone marrow donors from 2020–2024, with 139 transplants facilitated during this period. We are proud that 84 Rhode Island donors answered the call, from the list of over 40,000 state residents who are currently registered as willing to donate, to save lives during this period.

Despite these encouraging numbers, potential donors often fear losing income or worse, their employment, when requesting time off to donate and save a life. Bone marrow donation requires, on average, 40 non-consecutive hours spread over four to six weeks. This time includes pre-donation appointments, preparation calls, the actual donation procedure, and recovery time. For many potential donors, especially those in hourly, non-salaried, or low-wage positions, this time commitment without job protections can make donation impossible.

For patients needing a transplant, the stakes couldn't be higher. Most patients only have a couple of donor-matches on our registry, and many have just one. If that donor cannot say yes because of employment concerns, the patient may lose their only chance of survival.

H.B. 6065 would allow Rhode Island employees to take the necessary time off to donate bone marrow or other organs, like a kidney, and alleviate the fear of losing their jobs. By providing job protection for up to 5 days for bone marrow donors and 30 days for organ donors, this bill removes a critical barrier to donation.

On behalf of NMDP, we ask you to support this legislation. Each donation opportunity represents someone's best hope for survival against diseases like leukemia, lymphoma, and sickle cell disease.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anne Simaytis", with a stylized, cursive flourish at the end.

Anne Simaytis, MPS
Senior National Advocacy Director, NMDP